

Under-publicized Black Success Stories

Written by Raynard Jackson
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Judging from most of the media coverage about the state of Black America, some could reasonably conclude that Blacks are on the verge of extinction. The world knows about all the baby mama drama, heated debates over the “N” word, and what Beyonce and Jay-Z named their baby.



Yes, these are real events, but our grandparents and great grandparents would be ashamed of our community. Not because we have not made progress, but because we have failed to instill in our people a sense of history about our past, even the recent past.

There was a time that we could blame the “White media” for the way Blacks were portrayed, but now that we own both print and broadcast outlets, no longer can that be our excuse. I challenge Black media to get back to their original mandate of uplifting and educating our people.

How many of you know who owns the largest collection of Black art in the U.S.? Who holds the highest SAT score in the history of the NBA? Who is the longest serving female anchor on local TV news in the U.S? Who is one of the most successful post-career professional athletes of our time? Who is one of the most successful Blacks in the IT industry?

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Well, let me give you the answers to these questions.



Grant Hill (www.granthill.com) plays for the Phoenix Suns of the NBA and is the owner of the largest private collection of Black art in the U.S. Hill has a sizable collection featuring the work of Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, John Biggers, John Coleman, Arthello Beck, Jr. From 2003-2006, a selection of 46 works from the collection were featured in a touring exhibition at a number of American museums. Another point of interest, Hill's father, Calvin who was a star running back for the Dallas Cowboys, was a roommate of former president George W. Bush at Yale University. Grant Hill's mother, Janet, was a roommate of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at Wellesley College. Hill is proof positive of the art of the deal.

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David Robinson (www.thecarveracademy.org), former star for the San Antonio Spurs, holds the highest SAT score in the history of the NBA. The previous record was held by Bill Bradley, a former New York Knicks player and later U.S. Senator from New Jersey. Robinson scored 1350 out of 1600 on the SAT. He is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, with a degree in mathematics. He served two years in the Navy before turning pro. After Robinson's playing career was over, he and his wife, Valerie, founded the Carver Academy in San Antonio in September of 2001. They have put id="mce_marker"1 million of their own money into the school. They also enrolled their children who have since graduated from Carver Academy.

JC Hayward (www.jchayward.com) is the first female anchor in the D.C. market and the longest running female anchor in the U.S. She has worked at the CBS affiliate, WUSA, for more than 40 years. Last year, she was inducted into the National Association of Broadcast Journalists' Hall of Fame. Hayward recently bequeathed id="mce_marker" million to Howard University. That's after giving more than \$300,000 in scholarships and hundreds of hours mentoring young women.

Ulysses "Junior" Bridgeman is a former player with the Milwaukee Bucks. He spent 12 years in the NBA before becoming a full-time businessman. He is president of Bridgeman Foods, LLC. His company owns more than 162 Wendy's restaurants, 121 Chili's and is No. 3 on the Restaurant Finance Monitor's Top 200 franchisee-owned companies, with annual revenues in excess of \$500 million. Bridgeman started out working in a local Milwaukee Wendy's during the off-season. He worked every position from the counter to cleaning the bathrooms while he was still playing in the NBA.

David Steward is chairman and founder of World Wide Technology, Inc. (<http://www2.wwt.com>), the leading systems integrator that provides technology products, services and supply chain solutions to customers around the world. The company is one of the largest Black-owned businesses in the U.S., with revenues exceeding \$3.2 billion. Steward believes you can make money and be a Christian at the same time.

These are all successful people that most in our community have never heard of, yet are making a tremendous difference throughout our communities.

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